

## What You Can Do

1. Know the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code. If you are an employer or own an establishment that service the public, post a "Declaration of Management Policy" in your place of business indicating that you support its principles.
2. Help promote healthy cultural interplay by working with the Commission to organize intergroup conferences, panel discussions and film programs on human rights in your community.
3. As a good member of the community, when you witness an act of discrimination report the act to the Human Rights Commission or urge the victim to do so. Remember that the suffering of one detracts from the enjoyment of life for all.
4. If you have questions or suggestions contact a Commission branch office. The Human Rights Commission is open and accessible.
5. Keep informed of new developments in Human Rights legislation by placing yourself on the Commission's mailing list.
6. Enjoy your neighbours.

It is public policy in Ontario that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, creed, colour, age, sex, marital status, nationality, ancestry or place of origin.



Ontario  
Human Rights  
Commission

400 University Ave.  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1T7

(416) 965-6841

### Branch Offices

**Hamilton**  
1 West Ave. S.  
L8N 2R9  
(416) 527-2951

**Kenora**  
808 Robertson St.  
P9N 1X9  
(807) 468-3128

**Kingston**  
1055 Princess St.  
K7L 1H3  
(705) 542-2853

**Kitchener**  
824 King St. W.  
N2G 1G1  
(519) 744-7308

**London**  
560 Wellington St.  
N6A 3R4  
(519) 438-7291

**Ottawa**  
2197 Riverside Dr.  
K1H 7X3  
(613) 731-2415

Chairman  
Dorothea Crittenden

Vice Chairman  
W. Gunther Plaut

**Commissioners**  
Rosalie Abella  
Bromley Armstrong  
Peter Cicchi  
Brian Giroux  
Albin Jousse  
Borden C. Purcell  
Andrew Rickard  
Bhausaeheb Ubale

**Executive Director**  
George A. Brown

**Sault Ste. Marie**  
390 Bay St.  
P6A 1X2  
(705) 949-3331

**Sudbury**  
1538 La Salle Blvd.  
P3A 1Z7  
(705) 566-3071

**Thunder Bay**  
435 James St. S.  
P7E 6E3  
(807) 475-1693

**Timmins**  
273 Third Ave.  
P4N 1E2  
(705) 267-6231

**Windsor**  
500 Ouellette Ave.  
N9A 1B3  
(519) 256-3611

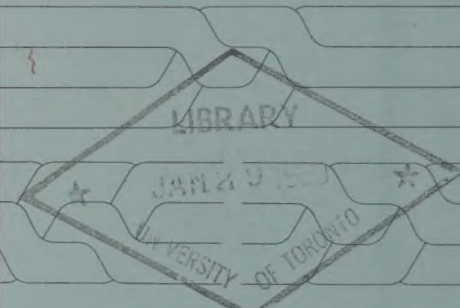


Ontario  
Human Rights  
Commission

# Human Rights in Ontario

Government  
Publications

CA20N  
L72  
-Z205



DEPOSITORY LIBRARY MATERIAL

## **The Ontario Human Rights Code and The Ontario Human Rights Commission**

A European immigrant draftsman applied for an advertised job in a short letter describing his experience. He was phoned to come for an interview. When he met the personnel manager he saw there was something wrong and the manager's statement that he was not qualified was not convincing.

A young Asian couple were looking for an apartment. Somehow, it always seemed that everything had just been rented a few minutes before they arrived to inspect the building.

A Black man was quietly told at the door of a popular restaurant that it was closing early that evening and they could not honour his reservation, even though he noticed that other people were still being seated.

When Margaret applied for a job for which she was qualified and signed her letter "M.L. Jones", she received a prompt reply requesting an interview. But when she arrived for her appointment, the interviewer realized she was female, and told her there'd "been some mistake" and the job was already taken.

Because these people were not satisfied with the explanations given to them they asked the Ontario Human Rights Commission to help them.

### **Just What is Human Rights, Really?**

Equality doesn't necessarily mean that we all have to be the same. What it does mean is that each of us has the right to be ourselves, of our own background, with our own religion, our own birthplace, language, sex and age. And that our access to a job, a home, or a leisure activity should not be limited by factors that have nothing to do with our individual merit as a person.

But while each of us in Ontario has the right to be what we are, sometimes we need to be reminded that other people share that same right, to be themselves. It is for this reason that the precepts of human rights were made into a Code under the law in Ontario.

### **Why is The Commission Here, and What Does It Do?**

Ontario has become a diverse, many-cultured community. Nearly one million people have come to Ontario from other countries since 1962 alone, bringing with them a rich variety of languages, traditions and lifestyles.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission was created to ensure that the rights granted under the law, the Ontario Human Rights Code, are enjoyed by everyone living and working in Ontario. The Code prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race,

creed, colour, sex, marital status, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, or age (40 to 65) in employment, housing, access to services and facilities available to the public, and related advertising.

The Commission has the responsibility to aid groups and individuals in working out new and more satisfactory ways to live and work together as citizens. To do this task, the Commission has opened eleven offices in different parts of Ontario for the service of the public; anyone may come in freely or telephone for information.

*The Code gives the Commission four things to do.*

### **1. Complaint Handling**

Whenever a man or woman has the necessary skills or willingness to be a worker, a tenant, or a customer but feels that he or she is being prevented from trying because of race, religion, sex or other grounds covered by the Code, they have the right to complain in person to the Commission.

A Human Rights Officer listens to the person tell their story, visits the person accused of acting against the law, and talks to others who can make clear what happened. These conversations are confidential. The officers are patient listeners who who do not take sides as to whether the law has been violated. They encourage both parties to meet on a basis of cooperation and goodwill, and are frequently very successful at helping to remove old, irrational fears and prejudices people may have held. Hopefully, the matter can be settled there, privately. No one is accused of breaking the law, and the job offer, apartment, or invitation can be given where required.

However, if people refuse to cooperate and conciliation is impossible, the Commission can call on the very wide powers it has under the Code to enforce the law. It can recommend to the Minister of Labour that a Board of Inquiry be named. The Board can then hold public hearings, take evidence from witnesses, and make a decision as to whether discrimination did or did not take place. If the Board decides that it did, they may recommend that the person who discriminated make amends in various ways, which may include the payment of money, and show that he or she will obey the law in the future. If there is still a refusal to carry out the Board's recommendations, the person can be brought to court for breaking the law.

### **2. Community Relations**

Sometimes problems or tensions arise between different racial or ethnic groups in schools, communities or industrial plants which can best be settled by a neutral third party. The Commission is willing to send its officers, trained in community relations, to deal with these problems quickly and effectively while all sides can still talk to one another without bitterness.

Within the limits of its resources, the Commission also attempts to defuse potentially explosive situations with an on-going program of talking, listening, and an airing of grievances, both real and imagined.

If a problem of discrimination against a group is widespread, continuing, and systematic, the Commission can aid in the establishment of positive programs to correct imbalances.

### **3. Public Education**

The Commission has the responsibility to explain to everyone in Ontario what the Code expects of us, how it protects us, and what it means to our everyday lives. More than that, the Human Rights Code asks each of us to examine the unconscious, unthinking attitudes we may harbour that provide the breeding ground for overt acts of discrimination. The officers of the Commission attempt to convey both the letter and the spirit of the law before clubs, schools, businesses, and church groups. The officers use all modes of communication—radio, television, books, pamphlets, seminars, conferences and advertising—to ask people to try to understand and appreciate the right of the other person to live his own life under the law.

### **4. Research**

As part of its program to assist in resolving the problems of our society, the Commission maintains a close working relationship with universities and researchers who are studying the causes of conflict and how they can best be dealt with. The Commission also maintains its own library of resource material and launches studies of particular problems or of new trends and developments in Ontario society.